



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Conservation Commission Minutes 03/04/2010**

Arlington Conservation Commission

Minutes

March 4, 2010

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex.

Present were Nathaniel Stevens, Ezra Benjamin, David White, William O'Rourke, Charles Tirone, Catherine Garnett and Ellen Reed of the Commission and Brian Thomas, Associate Commission member. Also in attendance were Mickey Marcus, Steve Poole, Rich Kirby, Ann Stiles, Doug Stiles, Jerome Carr, Bruce Whettle, Oliver Jagoutz, Susan Gera, Virginia Hutchinson, Orlando DiMambro, Chris Nauman, Steven Schaedel, Jill Dreeben, Greg Ginet, Suzy Nauman and Andrzej Konieczny.

7:45 p.m. – Commission Business

White/Tirone moved to approve the 2/25 **meeting minutes** as edited; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. White (Stevens?) conveyed the request from Michele Hessler of the **Cemetery Commission** regarding answers to outstanding questions on having cremains within wetland resource areas. Beyond the general reply that it is desirable that biodegradable materials are used with cremains in wetlands, no further detailed information has been found.

The board agreed to hold the **Meadowbrook Park cleanup** on Saturday, May 8, at 9-12pm.

Ms. Beckwith has received landscaping plans for the **Alewife Greenway** project and will compare these to the permitted plans to see if amending the permit is necessary. She will endeavor to report back to the Commission at its next meeting.

8pm – **Notice of Intent** – 18 Hamilton Rd, shoreline stabilization

Mr. Marcus present the detailed plans to regrade the shoreline and plant a new embankment stabilized with coconut fiber logs and install a wetland shelf into the pond. This detailed plan includes logs for turtle habitat, some stones (similar to existing). The purpose of the project is to prevent further erosion of the lawn area immediately adjacent to the condominium building where in the past year two trees have fallen due to this erosion. The project is filed as a limited project to restore habitat; bank, wetland, and land under water.

The Natural Heritage program will probably require that the area be inspected for the endangered sedge at the time of construction. The Commission will condition that the construction is supervised by a wetland scientist. The project should take approximately 1 week to complete.

With the applicant's permission, the Commission voted to continued the hearing to 4/1 at 8:15pm in order to individually visit the site and to allow for comments from DEP to be considered; motion passed unanimously.

8:15pm – **Notice of Intent** – Lot C Coolidge Rd, new house

The applicant's representative, Rich Kirby of LEC, provided a brief overview of the project for any new members of the audience. The new house project is located within the Buffer Zone of a wetland and set of small streams. The project proposes to mitigate for any impacts by enhancement plantings in southern portion of lot and an invasive species control project along with a monitoring stewardship program for 2 years.

The Commission conducted a site visit on February 4, 2010.

The applicants have provided documents to answers to additional questions that were asked by Ms. Beckwith and Mr. Thomas. Two other comments letters, from abutters, were also received by the Commission.

Ms. Garnett, a Registered Landscape Architect with 30-years of experience, presented a written comment and sketches on the layout plans and outlined the comments at the meeting. The lack of landscape plans to address the plant replacement requirements in the local bylaw inspired her comments. Confusion exists in differences in sizes required in the bylaw (DBH, diameter at breast-height) and those outlined in American Standard for Nursery Stock (caliper) also required in the bylaw. It was agreed that those Standards calling for caliper measurements would be followed in preparation of the replanting plan. The steep slopes of the site will require cut and fill in order to stabilize the plant root balls of the required replacement trees. Some of the proposed plant material is weak wooded and brittle. Tree wells could be used to limit the amount of regrading that would be required to plant the trees but their use would require further construction and disturbance within the 25 feet of the wetland resource areas.

Mr. Stevens requested that a landscaping plan be presented for review during the public hearing process, as the Commission has required of other applicants.

Mr. Kirby said that he would consider the comments and added that other towns have looked favorably upon new native plantings within resource areas.

Mr. Benjamin asked what is the amount of overburden. Mr. Kirby responded that during his site inspections for wetlands, he hand augered to approximately 20 inches in many locations near the wetland area. He did not state whether he reached groundwater.

Mr. Benjamin, a Professional Geologist, commented on the groundwater flow through fractures may be affected by removing a large chunk of the bedrock for the house foundation. More fractures created in bedrock can increase flows to the resource areas and downstream properties.

Mr. Poole responded that some sections of the ledge would be cut approximately 2 feet deep in order to install gravel below a basement foundation, or the house could be raised higher. The stone cutting could be done with a hydraulic ram hoe (a large jackhammer on a boom arm).

Ms. Beckwith asked what kind of stone is the ledge. Mr. Carr responded that it is gabbro diorite, an igneous rock. This hard rock should not be significantly fractured and that most flows should be over the stone. During his site walk on 2/9/10, he observed 3 actively flowing locations and 2 locations not flowing. Mr. Benjamin disagreed with Mr. Carr's characterization of the rock.

Mr. Thomas asked for calculations on the overall hydrology (including groundwater), and if there were any changes.

Mr. Pool responded that the drainage calculations provided the existing vs. proposed flows and show that the flows from the proposed project are little less than existing conditions. He and Mr. Carr explained that they are proposing a groundwater interceptor along the streetside of the project, entailing a stone filled ditch/trench leading to an outlet to the north side of the house. Bentonite would be added to this trench to ensure flow diversion.

Mr. Stevens asked that if the Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan requiring monthly and quarterly inspections of the stormwater system component was not followed, whether the system would not work. Mr. Poole confirmed the system would fail without such maintenance. He explained the locations of the inspection and cleanout points for each component.

Mr. Benjamin, a Professional Geologist, commented that subsurface flows down Murray St are what support the hydrology of the wetland and streams. If this is lowered then the resource areas will be drier.

Mr. Thomas asked that calculations be provided that show flows of both groundwater and surface water flows show that they will remain the same. Mr. Poole said he would provide such information.

Ms. Beckwith informed the Commission that the Town Engineer is working on comments on the stormwater management for the Town's Stormwater Bylaw and would provide those to the Commission.

Mr. Stevens asked for details of the proposed railway for the driveway as he did not think it was adequate to prevent snow from being shoveled or plowed into wetlands. Mr. Poole agreed to provide further details on this issue.

Mr. Ginet, of 157 Mt. Vernon, sent in a comment letter and stated that the streams outlet to his property and are perennial. In his 18 years of living there, he has seen the streams on the project site dry only once during an extended summer drought. If the pipe inlet clogs then the overflow enters Mt. Vernon St, in winter this means ice. Any redirection of this water will cause safety hazards and erosion. He asked who would be liable for these damages, the

landowner, the Town, the developer, the engineers.

Ms. Hutchinson, of 10 Murray St, who has lived in the area since 1937, reported that she has springs near and on her property. The Lot C property used to be a salt lick and watering hole for the Irwin Farm. 4 Murray St used to be a wetland until it was developed. After work in 1992 on a nearby lot, she experienced increase basement flooding.

Mr. Jagoutz of 161 Mt. Vernon, is a geologist and reported that the ledge is volcanic rock. He disagrees with Mr. Carr. He also responded that there are more streams/resource areas on this site than shown on the plans, based on what he saw at the site visit..

Mr. Kirby responded that the mapped streams on the proposed plan are the channelized areas flowing from the slope.

Ms. Gera of 85 Coolidge Rd, reported that she has water in her cellar that requires pumping by a sump pump. The area was an open stream that was capped off and goes on down the hill.

Mr. Scheadel, of 4 Murray, reported that he can hear water running under his house. The neighborhood has no street drains, as Coolidge Rd and Murray St. are private ways.

Mr. DiMambro commented that his relative is part-owner of one of the parcels of open land contiguous to this lot. He expressed his opposition to the present proposal.

Mr. Whelple asked if the Commission would consider the build out of the entire parcel while considering this development. The cumulative effects are important. He presented historic maps of the site, from 1875 and 1900 showing the land prior to the 81 lot development of the neighborhood, which involved lots of blasting for house construction and installation of water and sewer infrastructure. It's very difficult to characterize the flow of water through this area and independent peer review should be conducted before any development is approved.

Mr. Whelple also thinks the wetland resources are larger than those shown on the plans. Independent peer review should also be done for the delineation of wetland and streams. He also asked if he could receive a copy of the additional information sent to the Commission from the applicant.

Ms. Beckwith will obtain the requested and place 1 copy for public viewing at the Robbins Library Reference desk. Mr. Kirby can certainly provide email pdfs (Adobe files) of the new information.

Mr. Nauman, of 70 Coolidge Rd, also questions the wetland delineation and requests independent peer review of this information.

Mr. Konieczny, 169 Mt. Vernon, expressed support of the issues that Ms. Garnett raised regarding the steep slope issues and the difficulty of planting in this area. He had difficulty planting trees with rootballs.

The Commission deliberated the issue of peer review.

Ms. Beckwith commented that the applicant should entertain the idea that this lot may be unbuildable and look to the other lots. The overhang into the 25-foot no-build setback to the resource areas is not insignificant. Mr. White commented that the 25-foot no-build area should be determined by the drip line of the structure.

Mr. Kirby responded that the overhang should not impact the wetland as it is located on the north side of the area, and is sited over bare bedrock.

Mr. White responded that in his opinion the stream starts right up at the ledge outcrop. Mr. Kirby responded that he delineated where he determined the flow was channelized.

Mr. Kirby asked for a short break to consult with the landowners to consider the impact of the stated comments and subject of peer review. Mr. Stevens adjourned granted the request and the hearing was recessed for a short period.

Mr. Kirby returned to request a continuance of the hearing for 2 weeks to respond to the new questions and to consider the impact of peer review to the project.

Benjamin/Reed motioned to close the hearing; motion failed 2 to 5.

Tirone/O'Rourke motioned to continue the hearing to 3/18 at 8:30pm; motion passed 5 to 2.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Corinna Beckwith  
Commission Administrator